

San Francisco District

Established by federal authority in 1866, today's San Francisco District is responsible for approximately 40,000 square miles of territory, including the highly urbanized San Francisco Bay Area. Most of the District falls within a narrow strip of northern California coastline, stretching approximately 600 miles from the Oregon border to San Luis Obispo County, just south of Monterey. The District also has responsibility for the Klamath River Basin in southern Oregon.

The San Francisco District's mission is to provide civil works projects that help build the nation's long-term economic might in an environmentally sustainable way. The District plans, designs, constructs, and often operates and maintains, projects that provide river and harbor navigation, flood control, water supply, ecosystem restoration, wildlife protection and recreation. The majority of these projects are in partnership with local, state and federal agencies. In addition, the District also responds with emergency operations for natural disasters, regulates development affecting waterways and wetlands, and provides engineering and construction support to other technical and non-technical agencies, including the United States Armed Forces, currently conducting the ongoing global war on terrorism.

Under the Rivers and Harbors Act and the Clean Water Act, the San Francisco District serves as stewards for the nation's navigational channels and protects the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. The District promotes commercial navigation while at the same time protecting special aquatic sites and watersheds in Northern California.

The San Francisco District's operation and maintenance program includes dredging projects totaling 4.5 million cubic yards annually, allowing over 100 million tons of container goods to move through Bay Area navigation channels and harbors along the California coast. Cargo traffic has doubled in the past ten years and Pacific Rim traffic continues to climb, and three of the five busiest container ports in the nation are now located on the West Coast. Container vessels continue to grow larger and foreign ports continue to deepen, making the case for even deeper and wider channels in the Bay area.

Beneficial reuse of dredge material is managed through the San Francisco Long Term Management Strategy project. The Sonoma Baylands project restored tidal salt marsh habitat on a 348-acre-diked hayfield using dredged material from several maintenance dredging operations, including about 1.7 million cubic yards from Oakland Harbor. Dredge material continues to be used for environmental enhancement, flood protection and other projects throughout the District.

Debris collection helps to further ensure safe navigation on Federal waterways maintained by the District. The District's drift removal crew removes an average of 90 tons of debris that create hazards to navigation each month.

California has over 298 endangered species, and there are environmental aspects in every project and study undertaken by the District, and in each of the hundreds of dredging and development permit decisions made each year by the District Engineer. The District protects tens of thousands of acres of valuable wetlands within its jurisdiction, and is a leader in coordinating environmental activities with such agencies as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, the California Regional Water Quality Control Boards, and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. Many District projects work to enhance or restore former habitat, wetlands and watersheds. Through the regulatory program, the District protects environmental resources while allowing reasonable and necessary development to go forward.

Through flood damage reduction projects, the San Francisco District reduces or eliminates catastrophic costs due to flood damage. As Bay area populations and development expands, the District plans, designs, builds, and in some cases operates and maintains, flood damage reduction projects to protect people and property, while restoring and/or enhancing ecosystem values and functions.

The District has constructed and maintains two multipurpose flood control reservoirs: Lake Mendocino and Coyote Dam near Ukiah, and Lake Sonoma and Warm Springs Dam near Healdsburg. Each features recreational facilities that attract over a half million visitors per year.

The San Francisco Bay Hydraulic Model in Sausalito was formerly used as a scientific hydraulic tool by engineers, scientists, and planners, in a laboratory setting, to analyze the effects of change on the physical tidal forces of the bay and delta region both physically and numerically. The Bay Model Visitor Center, one of only nine Class A Corps visitor centers in the nation, provides public information and education programs focusing on the environmental, historical, and cultural elements of the San Francisco Bay Region. It attracts an average of more than 150,000 visitors annually.

Beyond Corps' projects, the San Francisco District provides a variety of services to other federal agencies. Current projects include work in design, engineering, environmental work, contracting, permitting, and project construction management. Types of projects include pier construction, dredging, and storm water discharge permitting for the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Maritime Administration.